



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



Copyright by American Press Association

OUR COLONEL

# NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW

JULY, 1914

## GREETINGS TO OUR COLONEL

BY THE EDITOR

*"There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us."*

WELCOME, sir, to our country! Grateful as we were for the momentary distraction afforded by your passing call, our craving is for a prolonged visit, such as distant relatives are prone to make upon occasion. Unlike their arrivals, however, yours is most opportune. We need you—all of us. You have heard the call of the Moose. Listen, and you shall hear the braying of the donkey. Even the elephant trumpets with unbecoming exultance of spirit. And the tired—the very tired—business man! From the depths of his dejection he stretches forth his arm to grasp the hand that once did smite him sorely. Wilson's tenaciousness is beginning to weary us. We are sick of Bryan. We want Our Colonel.

Now what are you going to do—and say—to cheer us up? When you returned from the Undoubted river you appeared, not, of course, beaten to a frazzle, but somewhat worn and frayed. Clearly, the propounding of pertinent queries at that time would have been inconsiderate at the least, perhaps, indeed, unduly harassing; but now you have

lost your resemblance to Job, have recovered from the inevitable effects of monkey steaks and mosquito bites, have discarded the unwonted cane, and have regained the determined vivacity which for so long constituted your distinctive personal charm and your chief political asset. The wedding, too, we read, was both joyous and noteworthy, a pleasant occasion having been reported by all; and the royal geographers listened calmly to your temperate discourse upon the hills and dales and unsuspected running brooks of far-off lands. Assuming then that the traditional fiddle is not now more fit than your own variegated self, we no longer hesitate to exercise the parental prerogative and to ask you plainly, What are your intentions? Honorable, no doubt; but "whit way," as the Scots inquire, does your fancy point? Toward the old love, so long so true and yet so brusquely jilted, or to the new affinity who in your absence has pined away to the merest shadow of her former robustness? Or would you turn polygamous and take them both? Speak, Our Colonel, and tell us! The President, to say nothing, for once, of the Secretary of State, would like to know. And so, indeed, would all of us.

Perhaps you have not decided. Seemingly, at any rate, you had not when you sailed away. The widely heralded bugle-call which you cannily left behind for publication on Monday morning when overshadowing news is scarce was hardly a bleat. It was not like you, in the first place, to begin a pronouncement with an apology. True, as you pleaded, you had been absent nearly eight months and therefore had "not been able to acquire the necessary information" that would enable you to "respond intelligently to many of the inquiries" made of you. A diplomatic utterance surely, but hardly such as we are accustomed to regard as Rooseveltian. When, pray, in the glowing history of omniscient didacticism, did mere information become a requisite of intelligent response? For this unprecedented hesitancy there must be a reason. What can it be? Misgiving of judgment or only the instinctive prudence of advancing years?

"When I return from abroad," you continued, "I shall at once take up actively the political situation. It goes without saying that I intend, to the utmost of my ability, to do all that I can for the principles for which I have contended and for the men throughout the country who have

stood so valiantly in the fight that the Progressive party is waging and has waged for these principles."

A comforting reassurance, mayhap, to the aspiring ones who so valiantly burned their political bridges when they followed, followed you; and yet how unlike the thrilling adjuration to stand at Armageddon and battle for the Lord! But let you proceed:

There is wide-spread apprehension among our people. The pinch of poverty is felt in many a household. We cannot ignore the conditions which have brought about this state of things. The cost of living has not been reduced. Not the slightest progress has been made in solving the trust question. It has been shown that the reduction of the tariff in no shape or way helps toward this solution.

That times are psychologically somewhat trying is reluctantly admitted even in Washington, where disagreeable facts percolate slowly; necessary retrenchment in personal expenditures has followed inevitably and perhaps advantageously; but there is no overcrowding of almshouses as yet, despite the quite common dearth of employment in manufacturing communities. True, regardless of the ebullient Mr. Redfield's insistence to the contrary, the cost of living has not been reduced; but would it have diminished under Our Colonel's guidance? Did it?

"The high cost of living," we are told upon high authority, "is due partly to world-wide and partly to local causes; partly to natural and partly to artificial causes. The measures proposed in this platform on various subjects, such as the tariff, the trusts, and conservation will of themselves remove the artificial causes. There will remain other elements, such as the tendency to leave the country for the city, waste, extravagance, bad system of taxation, poor methods of raising crops, and bad business methods in marketing crops. To remedy these conditions requires the fullest information, and, based on this information, effective government supervision and control to remove all the artificial causes. We pledge ourselves to such full and immediate inquiry and to immediate action to deal with every need such inquiry disclosed."

The quotation is from the platform of the Progressive party. Is it reasonable to suppose that these many inquiries could have been made and that truly remedial "action" could have been taken to produce actual results in the few months that have elapsed since Mr. Wilson was

inaugurated? Lowering the rates may not reduce costs materially even after a full trial, but it is the only remedy so far suggested and it cannot yet be fairly pronounced a failure. You thought so yourself, Our Colonel, once upon a time, but when the day came to act you hurriedly forsook the fox and dashed madly off at full cry in pursuit of a rabbit. What, moreover, said the Progressive platform?

*"We demand tariff revision because the present tariff is unjust to the people of the United States. Fair dealing toward the people requires an immediate downward revision of those schedules wherein duties are shown to be unjust or excessive."*

There is no room for argument here, Our Colonel. Democratic action conformed precisely to the Progressive pledge. If the one was taken in error, the other was made in fault. The grave defect in the new tariff lies, not in costs, but in the loss in revenue ensuing from the President's ill-judged insistence upon removing the tax upon sugar.

"Not the slightest progress," you declare, "has been made in solving the trust question." We frankly concede grave misgivings as to whether the Administration measures passed by the House of Representatives tend to clarification or confusion of existing law, but how idle it is to assert, in the face of these acts, that nothing has been done! Too much and too hurriedly, we should say. The truth is that the trust problem was solved nearly a quarter of a century ago, when the Sherman Act was passed. Recent experience has demonstrated beyond question the efficacy and adaptability of that law. The trouble arose from the refusal or failure of previous Administrations to enforce it. Permit us to refresh your memory. The organization of large combinations began in 1898, but proceeded so slowly that their total capitalization at the end of two years was barely three billions of dollars. Between January 1, 1900, and January 1, 1904, nearly nine thousand plants were combined under an aggregate capitalization of more than twenty billions. During this period one Theodore Roosevelt, elected as Vice-President, was serving as President under a pledge to "carry out McKinley's policies." In 1904, as you may recall, he was chosen to succeed in his own right, and the work of consolidation proceeded so thriftily, without let or hin-

drance, that at the end of his term the total trust capitalization had reached the enormous sum of thirty-one billions of dollars. There was no lack of law to prevent the formation of these great combinations. The Sherman Act was on the statute-books as it is to-day, when nobody would dream of attempting to organize a monopoly. But it was not enforced. If it had been, there would be no "trust question" now awaiting "solution" by President Wilson or anybody else. And in truth there is none. The courts are gradually but surely undoing the work which was illegally done under a personally conducted Administration which held itself under peculiar obligation to its "very good friends." Under the circumstances, Our Colonel, might it not be the part of your newly acquired prudence to avoid the pointed discussion of the "trust question" which is bound to ensue from criticism of President Wilson's honest endeavors, however injudiciously directed, to re-establish competition?

What you might do and what we wish the President would do is this: Urge the enactment of laws which would enable American manufacturers to compete with their rivals in foreign markets upon an even basis. Every other nation encourages combination for that purpose, and there is every reason why we should and no reason why we should not do likewise. Whatever may be our differences respecting domestic policy, whatever may be the relative advantages of "regulation" and "competition," we owe it to our producers, our manufacturers, our merchants, and our workingmen to present a united front in strife for trade throughout the world. It is a wholly practicable proposition, as we shall demonstrate in due time; but it seems not to have appealed or perhaps occurred to the present Administration. But you, Our Colonel, in your own well-remembered words to the late Mr. Harriman, are a business man and surely can realize the idiocy of a condition which compels the export of nearly two billions in value of raw products as against only eight hundred millions of manufactures. Meanwhile, let us resume our political cogitations.

After declaring somewhat reservedly your intention to speak up for your valiant lieutenants from Maine to California, you say:

But I believe that this fall my chief duty lies right here in the State of New York. I doubt whether there is a State in the Union that shows

more conclusively than this State the dreadful evil of the two-boss system in political life. The people of this State, the honest people, the good citizens who wish clean and efficient government, no matter what their party affiliations may be, are growing bitterly indignant with a system which provides for the seesaw of the Murphy and Barnes machines in the government of this State. There is not a State in which the evils of bi-partisan boss rule are more concretely illustrated than right here.

Under such rules it is absolutely impossible to get decent and effective government. It is impossible to secure fair treatment for the honest business man, for the honest wage-earner, or for the honest farmer. From the canals and highways downward each branch of the government has been administered primarily with a view to the political advantage, and often with a view to the personal enrichment, of different political leaders. No advantage whatever to the people at large can possibly come by keeping this system and substituting under-bosses of Mr. Barnes for under-bosses of Mr. Murphy as the beneficiaries of the system. I believe the time has come to clean house in New York.

And I believe that all right-minded people ought to act together without regard to their ordinary party differences in a determined effort to accomplish this task and to destroy the malign and baleful influence of both the Barnes machine and the Murphy machine in this State.

This has the old-time ring. The blending of redoubtability and astuteness, too, is perfect. It is quite safe to denounce Murphy and Barnes; they have no friends. The reference to "all right-minded people" is capital also, especially when taken in connection with your previous expression of confidence in the nobleness of "the rank and file of the Republican party"; it illustrates your breadth and tolerance on the eve of an election. But has nobody told you that, while you were moving mountains and shifting the courses of streams, the New York Legislature passed a Direct-Primary Bill which confers upon the voters the power to nominate candidates for all State officers? You have no longer to advocate this great Progressive principle; it has been adopted. The rule of the people is established. Murphy and Barnes can cast but one vote each out of a total of more than a million. The wrong-minded bosses are down and out; the right-minded rank and file are in the saddle. So you perceive, Our Colonel, that, mayhap to your regret, there is nothing further along this line to talk about. Can you doubt for a moment that "the people of this State, the good citizens who wish clean and efficient government" will voice their "bitter indignation" at their respective primaries? Certainly not. Armageddon is taken. The battle is won. Now we shall see what we shall see. Pennsylvania and Penrose point the way.



"The economic conditions," you say, "are such that business is in jeopardy and that the small business man, the farmer, and the industrial wage-worker are all suffering because of these conditions. The truth simply is that the only wise and sane propositions, the only propositions which represent a constructive governmental progressivism and the resolute purpose to secure good results instead of fine phrases, were the principles enunciated in the Progressive platform in connection with the trusts and the tariff alike. Our policies would have secured the passing around of prosperity and also the existence of a sufficient amount of prosperity to be passed around. Throughout the country all I can do to emphasize these facts will be done."

Why say the "small" business man? Is not the large manufacturer also "suffering because of these conditions"? It is not becoming to make a purely demagogic distinction. And, if it be really true that adoption of your policies would have achieved prosperity and passed it around, how does it happen that business is virtually at a standstill? Not only, as we have noted, does the new tariff conform to the Progressive pledge, but it was enacted with the aid of Progressive votes. The new Trade Commission Bill, too, is precisely in line with your demand for "a strong Federal Administrative Commission" designed to "maintain permanent active supervision over industrial corporations engaged in interstate commerce, . . . doing for them what the Government now does for the national banks, and what is now done for the railroads by the Interstate Commerce Commission." Few, indeed, of your presumably popular proposals have escaped the eagle eye of the managing director of the Democratic party. Even the Presidential primary has found in him an academic champion. In some respects, indeed, as you must admit, he has out-progressed the Progressives, most notably, perhaps, in sacrificing his declared convictions to the demands of organized labor. You would not have done that. In fact, you refused to do it in a positive declaration that will stand everlastingly to your credit. The one conspicuous policy which the President has not appropriated from your collection is the Recall of Judges and Judicial Decisions. But we observe, Our Colonel, that you yourself seem to have shelved that awe-inspiring principle for the time being. In any case, you did not advert to it once during your stay with us. We

wonder why. Can it be possible that you heard a loud whisper from Republican headquarters to the effect that, of all your notions, this is the only one that definitely bars the way to complete reconciliation?

We have already directed your attention to the obvious pining away of your political affinity. So, doubtless, did the more valiant of your lieutenants during your many conferences. But did they indicate the full extent of that decline? Did they tell you that only 48,253 of the 444,389 Pennsylvanians who voted for you participated in the recent Progressive primaries, while simultaneously the Democrats lost 160,000 and the Republicans actually gained 55,000 and polled 80,000 more than both combined; that recent bye-elections of Congressmen resulted as follows: In Iowa, Republican gain 2,000, Democratic loss 7,000, Progressive loss 10,000; in New Jersey, Republican gain 4,000, Democratic loss 4,000, Progressive loss 4,000; in Maine, Republican gain 8,000, Democratic loss 3,500, Progressive loss 6,800; in Massachusetts, Republican loss 1,900, Democratic loss 6,000, Progressive loss 5,500; in West Virginia, Republican loss 1,700, Democratic loss 9,000, Progressive loss 9,500; that in New York the Progressive enrolment has dwindled to a beggarly 110,000 as against 390,000 votes cast for you in 1912; that in California the Republican enrolment exceeds that of either Democrats or Progressives by more than 100,000; that South Dakota, which gave you 10,000 majority, has recently elected a stand-pat Republican United States Senator by 9,000; that the recent State election in Arkansas showed Republican loss 8,000, Democratic loss 15,000, Progressive loss 13,000; that in the Maryland Senatorial election the Republican vote increased 20,000 and the Progressive vote decreased 50,000; that in Schuylers County, Pennsylvania, the Republican enrolment increased 10,000 and the Progressive enrolment decreased 9,000; that in Allegheny County, where Taft received only 24,000, the Republican enrolment now is 127,000; that Omaha, Nebraska, shows Republican gain 4,000, Democratic loss 4,000, Progressive loss 5,600; that the Republicans swept St. Louis at the spring election and carried the leading Progressive district in Chicago; and, finally, that few, if any, Progressives have been elected to the legislatures of States which gave you the strongest support?

What is the true portent of these amazing Republican

revivals accompanied invariably by corresponding Democratic reversals and Progressive recessions to the vanishing-point? Commenting in the January number of this REVIEW upon "The President's Vision" of but a single cloud in the sky, we ventured to remark:

True, a complete union of Republicans and Progressives at the forthcoming elections is beyond power of accomplishment, even though an understanding should be reached by the leaders. With only Republicans and Democrats in the race, a certain proportion of the Progressive vote would go to the Wilson candidates. Whether this percentage would suffice to offset the effect of Democratic disaffection in States like New York and Illinois is a question. Whether it would overcome the far greater and incalculable consequence of continuing and increasing business depression, lack of employment for hundreds of thousands of workingmen, and disgust at income taxation, added to the normal reaction which invariably follows a Presidential victory, is even more problematical. Enough has been said, in any case, to show that little dependence can be put upon faith in maintaining a majority simply because it is large; the record of 1894 indicates how quickly it may disappear entirely. Nor, in our humble judgment, should too much reliance be placed upon a continuance of Mr. Roosevelt's obduracy. None realize better than that most astute of politicians that, to win the Presidency in 1916, he must (1) defeat Mr. Wilson in the Congressional elections and incapacitate him for the remainder of his term, (2) avert further disclosure of the numerical weakness of his own party, and (3) reconcile Republicans and business men generally to his candidacy. For ourselves, we shall be greatly surprised if the movement looking to a union of forces already inaugurated by Mr. Roosevelt's personal lieutenant, Comptroller Prendergast of New York City, does not eventuate in sharply drawn lines between the Democratic party and the Opposition in the coming November elections.

Few now, we suspect, in the light of the recent political happenings noted above, would deny the warrant for this apprehension expressed six months ago. Even the President seems at last to perceive the writing on the wall if, as reported, he gave, as a reason for forcing so many Democratic measures at this session, his desire to clear the way for *non-partisan* legislative work thereafter.

But we are not now discussing the Democratic predicament. It is yours and your party's that is under consideration. And here we direct your attention to a most significant change in sentiment. Three months ago, Our Colonel, you were complete master of the situation. Republicans without number who had execrated your name, especially in 1912, had become so thoroughly dissatisfied with the Wilson Administration that they stood ready to accept even you,

chiefly, no doubt, as the lesser of two evils, but not unwillingly at that.

Not so now! The protracted business depression has borne so heavily upon the Democratic party in public estimation that these Republicans no longer feel that they need you. The wisest and shrewdest of them are convinced that the great mass of voters, for one reason or another, but chiefly because of their inability to prosper, have become so embittered that they await only an opportunity to repudiate, for the time at least, not merely the party in power, but all in the guise of governmental interference and governmental control regarded as radicalism that the party stands for. And this antipathy is reckoned to comprehend you, Our Colonel, and your policies no less than the President and his. It is "a plague o' both your houses," in the minds of these observers, who firmly believe—and not, we opine, without some basis of excuse—that the pendulum has already swung so far back that the spirit of conservatism is bound to dominate in the coming elections. There lies before us a communication from one whose sagacity you have often recognized, whose advice you have often heeded, and whose name, if presented, would carry to your mind the greatest weight. He writes as follows:

What do you think of a "psychological" depression? The present situation satisfies me because I think I can see, first, that Roosevelt's nomination and election by Republicans are impossibilities; second, that Wilson will be beaten for the Presidency; and, third, that the situation is to be most amusing in watching Theodore study a way out of the dilemma in which he finds himself. Abuse of Wilson is going to increase the Republican vote, not the Progressive vote. He does not look forward even to a canvass of Pennsylvania with any degree of confidence, and if he goes in and measures swords with the old Boss and is beaten and the Boss is returned, his prestige will receive a very severe blow. He finds his Progressive friends who put up the money for him a good deal embarrassing at present, and a voyage to Spain after he has looked over the ground is a relief. Meanwhile Wilson is "satisfying the conscience of the country" by utterly unnecessary laws whose effect certainly will be "psychological" both in diminution of business and in diminution of votes.

Whether or not or to what extent we concur in this view is beside the mark, but we do say this: If, as you have announced, you shall go into Pennsylvania and make attacks upon the Administration the basis of your campaigning, and if the President, as he has announced, shall also

take the stump in Pennsylvania for the purpose of repelling your assaults, Senator Penrose will be re-elected by an overwhelming majority. You, the master politician of your day, can hardly fail to recognize this certainty. The President may not. With all his subconscious astuteness Mr. Wilson is likely to mistake his real adversary. It was quite obvious, for example, in 1912, as you may or may not recall we warned him from the outset that it was you, Our Colonel, not Mr. Taft, whom he had to beat; and yet he persisted in directing his fire at the weaker contender. Now the situation just as clearly is reversed by the changed conditions, and, judging from his declaration of purpose, Mr. Wilson has yet to be apprised of the fact. But that is his affair, concerning which we shall address to him words of friendly counsel at some future time when you are not listening.

Meanwhile, in resolving your own ticklish problem, consideration must of course be given to the unescapable facts that the coming contest will lie between the two old parties; that the Progressives no longer hold the balance of power; that telling assaults by you upon the Administration will serve only, as the wise man quoted above remarks, to make Republican votes; that Mr. Wilson's return fire may again be misdirected; and that the more vigorous and acrimonious your discussion becomes the more common will be the bestowal by an exasperated people of a plague upon both and the more certain and easy will be the election of Republican candidates.

That is the true situation. Now again we ask: What, Our Colonel, are you going to do?

Clearly, as you remark, your first duty is to your own State. And here are perplexities in abundance. That you will be able readily to reconcile the differences between Gifford's Brother Amos and Sir George Perkins we have no doubt. The unamiable brother can find no political abiding-place other than the shadow of your wing, and the gallant knight's material support is not to be ignored. Moreover, as the *Times* observes truly and greatly to your credit, "One of the Colonel's admirable traits is standing by his friends." Sir George may or may not have smuggled into or pilfered from the Progressive platform a plank relating to trust regulations; but what boots it? His views are yours and yours are his, and Gifford's Brother Amos must

adjust his to coincide or noisily step aside. It is not the risen tempest that should annoy you; it is the fact that it is in a teapot, so greatly has your party shrunk.

"No, brethren," you said to the reporters on the quarter-deck, "I cannot talk about fusion now." Not then! You needed time for reflection, and took it as decisively as you took Panama. Meanwhile, as you may have heard, the vigilant Mr. Hearst proffers Grecian favor and hints at co-operation somewhat after the manner of Carranza. "If Mr. Roosevelt," he says, "shall conscientiously support such men and such policies [as suit Mr. Hearst] he will secure support from many unexpected quarters, from many Democrats who no longer find Jeffersonian Democracy or any spirit of patriotic loyalty or any hope of national prosperity in the Democratic party." This has a pleasing sound, but observe, Our Colonel, that the First Chief of the Independence League will consent to no armistice, and demands, as a *sine qua non* of mediation, the head of Elihu Root and repudiation of Henry Cabot Lodge, at whose residence, in preference to the White House, you dined when in Washington.

Can the demands of this rigorous taskmaster be met? We fear not. Consider for a moment the cause of Mr. Hearst's unceasing vilification of Mr. Root. It is the speech which he delivered in Syracuse accusing Mr. Hearst of instigating the assassination of President McKinley. But it was not Mr. Root's declaration; it was yours, made "with the full knowledge and authority" of yourself, the President, by a member of your Cabinet speaking at your request and by your direction. You will readily recall how reluctant Mr. Root was to perform the task, how at first he positively refused, and how finally he complied, solely from a sense of loyalty to your Administration, in response to your vehement insistence that it was absolutely necessary from the standpoint of party. Mr. Root knew full well that he was inviting newspaper objurgation without stint, and he has had it from that day to this in what Mr. Wilson would call "ungrudging measure."

You, the instigator, escaped for the simple reason that Mr. Hearst regarded your representative as the more vulnerable. That you should now join hands with the man whom you pronounced measurably responsible for assassination against a Secretary who only did your bidding is to

our mind unthinkable. Praise be, Our Colonel, your moral fiber is not of the variety that permits of disavowal of faithful service for purely selfish advantage. We perceive here no possibility of coalition.

Word comes from Spain that you are prepared to approve of fusion of "Progressives and Progressive Republicans"—why not also Progressive Democrats?—and that, having constituted yourself a primary, you would designate Mr. Whitman for Governor and Mr. Straus for Senator. Don't do that! They might win and, if they should, the Republican ticket in 1916 would be most probably Borah and Whitman—a combination quite too formidable for pleasing contemplation by avid Democrats. No, no, Our Colonel; run yourself! Give the disconsolate Democrats at least a fighting chance!

We beg of you, too, as a sportsman, to nominate a Progressive candidate for Congress in every district. Think how many more of your policies may be realized if the Democrats shall have two additional years in which to strive, let us say, as one! Remember the Republicans—how they threw out your delegates in Chicago; how they nominated Taft against your express wish and still hold him to be reputable; how they reviled you on the stump as a traitor and an ingrate; how they sneered at Armageddon; how they abused Albert Jeremiah Beveridge; how they snickered at Sir George; how they tried to discredit Grand-brother Lyman Abbott as a brewer of coffee; how they said you drank liquor and told stories and Heaven knows what all.

Forgive them? Never! Rather extend to the sympathetic enemy the help so sorely needed. It is one of your glories that you have always stood for the under dog. Consider, then, that the Democrats would be a minority in the House of Representatives at this moment if the opposition had been united against them, and imagine what will happen in November if the Republicans have a clear field! Study the significant record of recent elections presented above, and read with care the following statement of an unhappy political plight from the sharp-eyed *Argonaut* of California:

Much, of course, will depend upon Mr. Roosevelt himself. His gifts are great. His opportunity is exceptional. The Democratic Administration has failed at vital points. It is not solving the great issues with respect

to which its assurances were positive. It is in many ways hurting the prosperity of the country. It is disturbing and complicating our foreign relations. It has brought us to the verge of an unnecessary and foolish war and is likely to lead us still farther. It is failing at the point of administrative competence. In brief, it is disappointing the country—it tends to nothing less than to deepen the universal distrust of Democratic capacity for efficient and prosperous maintenance of all the varied interests dependent upon the intelligence, the consistency, and the force of governmental policy. It would be idle to deny that all this makes a situation curiously suitable to Mr. Roosevelt's peculiar genius.

Thousands upon thousands of the right-thinking men whom you, Our Colonel, love are being convinced or deceived by constantly reiterated assertions such as these. The situation is grave, very grave—and you alone can save it. Will you not act (along the lines indicated, of course) promptly, patriotically, progressively, and prettily?

Macedonia cries to Armageddon for help from Gideon's band!

### IS COMPLETE SURRENDER INEVITABLE?

We acknowledge receipt of the following inquiry from Mr. P. A. Wilting, of Denver:

SIR,—The writer has read with much interest your article on the proposed labor exemption from the Sherman law. As you state, the President seemed set against permitting the amendments that the union leaders demanded; but, since your article was written, he seems to have gone over to the Gompers crowd, bag and baggage, greatly to the surprise and disappointment of the writer and other friends and supporters. Is this the fact?

It is with no little chagrin that we express a fear that it is indeed the fact. In no other way does it seem possible to account for the President's unexpected display of the white feather. The original sop to labor unions appeared in this section:

That nothing contained in the anti-trust laws shall be construed to forbid the existence and operation of fraternal, labor, consumers', agricultural or horticultural organizations, orders, or associations operating under the lodge system instituted for the purpose of mutual help and not having capital stock or conducted for profit, or to forbid or restrain individual members of such orders or associations from carrying out the legitimate objects of such associations.

Thus far but no farther, the President firmly declared, would he go in discriminating between classes of American citizens; but Mr. Gompers demanded more in this form:



Nor shall such organizations, orders, or associations, or the members thereof, be held or construed illegal combinations or conspiracies in restraint of trade under the anti-trust law.

The 'House of Representatives, sitting under the threatening eye of Mr. Gompers, promptly adopted this amendment, and it is now in the Senate. The Gompers members voted for it under the belief that it flatly prohibits the enjoining of labor unions as in restraint of trade, no matter what they may do; the Administration Democrats accepted it upon the President's reported interpretation that it means nothing; and all candidates for re-election were only too willing to pass the real responsibility on to the courts. Some of the Representatives who cravenly belied their convictions doubtless hope that the Senate will strike out the provision as it struck out a similar one fourteen years ago, but there is small reason to anticipate such an outcome. The Democrats will follow their leader, and the Republicans will—in fact, can—do hardly more than see to it that the blame is placed where it belongs. There is still time for the President to retrace his fateful step, but apparently he has decided to take the plunge and trust to luck and cuttlefish practices. It is a hazardous performance. Even the *World*, the foremost supporter of the Administration, balks at the undertaking, saying frankly and plainly:

In its original form the bill was intended to put legitimate combinations of labor upon an equality with legitimate combinations of capital. As all criminal law recognizes intent, it was felt that there could be no reasonable objection to the safeguards thus thrown around industrial organizations which are not in their essence trusts, monopolies, or conspiracies. The amendments, however, go far beyond this. They plainly exclude labor organizations, lawful or unlawful, from the operation of the anti-trust law. They plainly assert that certain acts, often criminal in their nature, shall not be illegal when committed by labor unions or their members.

The bill as drawn contained many wise qualifications which, in fact, safeguarded the true rights of labor. The amendments are without qualification, and if enacted into law will constitute class legislation which can hardly survive judicial examination. Why waste time and energy upon them?

Whether or not this undoubted "class legislation" will "survive judicial examination" is a question. President Taft, in common with Senators Edmunds, Evarts, Pugh, Coke, Best, and George, held such discriminatory measures to be manifestly unconstitutional no less than contrary to

sound public policy, but it is by no means certain that the Supreme Court as at present constituted will take that view. The contrary, indeed, seems to be indicated by its latest decision. In the case brought by the State of Missouri to exclude the Harvester Company, the defendant corporation claimed that the law was unconstitutional—

Because said statute arbitrarily discriminates between persons making or selling products and commodities and persons selling labor and service of all kinds, in that each section of said statute applies only to articles of merchandise, and not to labor or services and the like, the prices of which are equally and similarly determined by competition.

The Supreme Court rejected this plea upon grounds set forth in these words:

These contentions may be considered together, both involving a charge of discrimination—the one because the law does not embrace vendors of labor, the other because it does not cover purchasers of commodities as well as vendors of them. Both, therefore, invoke a consideration of the power of classification which may be exerted in the legislation of the State. And we shall presently see that power has very broad range. A classification is not invalid because of simple inequality. We said in *Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway Co. v. Matthews* (174 U. S., 96, 106), by Mr. Justice Brewer: "The very idea of classification is that of inequality, so that it goes without saying that the fact of inequality in no manner determines the matter of constitutionality." Therefore it may be there is restraint of competition in a combination of laborers and in a combination of purchasers, but that does not demonstrate that legislation which does not include either combination is illegal. Whether it would have been better policy to have made such comprehensive classification it is not our province to decide. In other words, whether a combination of wage-earners or purchasers of commodities called for repression by law under the conditions in the State was for the legislature of the State to determine. . . . The foundation of our decision is, of course, the power of classification which a legislature may exercise, and the cases we have cited, as well as others which may be cited, demonstrate that some latitude must be allowed to the legislative judgment in selecting the "basis of community." We have said that it must be palpably arbitrary to authorize a judicial review of it, and that it can not be disturbed by the courts "unless they can see clearly that there is no fair reason for the law that would not require with equal force its extension to others whom it leaves untouched."

This means, in a word, that the Supreme Court refuses to accept the responsibility which rightfully attaches to legislative bodies, and gives warning that it can no longer be utilized as a buffer to enable the Congress to evade the consequences of its cowardly performances. Although the ambiguity of the Gompers amendment clearly was designed to afford the President the excuse of which he promptly

availed himself for revising his declared position, this decision seems to have closed even that loophole, and, if he should sign the Bill, he must do so with full knowledge of its probable effect.

Simultaneously, as a consequence of his original concession to political expediency, it is practically certain that Mr. Wilson will have to face another condition even more trying because wholly unsusceptible of misinterpretation. Precisely as we predicted months ago, the insatiable Mr. Gompers continues, like the daughters of the horse leech, to cry, Give, give! When the President signed the Sundry Civil Bill, which forbade the use of a specific appropriation in prosecuting labor unions, he excused his act upon the ground that other funds were available for that purpose. Mr. Gompers has now deprived him of that pretext by forcing into the Appropriation Bill this sweeping proviso:

Enforcement of anti-trust laws: For the enforcement of anti-trust laws, including not exceeding \$10,000 for salaries of necessary employees at the seat of government, \$300,000; provided, however, that no part of this money shall be spent in the prosecution of any organization or individual for entering into any combination or agreement having in view the increasing of wages, shortening of hours, or bettering the conditions of labor, or for any act done in furtherance thereof not in itself unlawful.

The House of Representatives meekly acquiesced, and it is reported that the Senate Committee has already signified its approval. If the President should now say simply that he will veto the Bill if it comes before him with this proviso included, there would be nothing for the Democratic Senators to do but to strike it out. But there is small prospect of his taking this course. It is far more likely that he will make no sign until the Bill reaches him, and then, while perhaps again sternly pronouncing such limitation "unjustifiable in character and principle," will weakly plead, as before, that he cannot kill the proviso without depriving thousands of suffering employees of their wages appropriated by the Bill as a whole, and then attach his signature.

It can hardly be expected or hoped for that, after having shown the white feather, President Wilson will now refuse to make his surrender complete, thus definitely repudiating the fundamental principle of equality before the law and fixing upon the Democratic party the odium of exempting a class from prosecution for criminal offenses.

But the penalty—the penalty that must be paid!

## OUR ILLITERATES: WHO AND WHY

A RECENT Congressional report declared the existing illiteracy in the United States to be "a disgrace to the nation." The word was strong, but not altogether undeserved. Any considerable prevalence of illiteracy is discreditable to any civilized state. In the United States, moreover, some phases of illiteracy, which we shall presently specify, are so flagrant as to merit the harsher word. Indeed, the general statement sounds sufficiently appalling—that in 1910 there were 5,516,163 illiterates above ten years of age, or 7.7 per cent. of all that part of the population. Worse still is the fact that there were among these 2,273,603 adult males, enough to turn the scale in any national election ever yet held. It does seem startling to say that the balance of electoral power is held in the United States by men who cannot read nor write.

Generalizations are, however, unsafe and unconvincing. In order to appreciate the purport of illiteracy in this country we must look beyond the statistical totals to some of the details, so as to perceive who these illiterates are, and why they are illiterate, and what classes of them are increasing or decreasing, and why. If we do this, the problem will assume a materially different aspect.

Our illiterates are to be divided into four major classes, besides certain almost negligible classes, such as Indians, Chinese, etc. These four are:

I. White people, of American birth and parentage; of those of whom, more than ten years of age in 1910, 1,378,884, or 3.7 per cent., were illiterate. That record is undoubtedly a grave reproach. It is the more grave, it is disgraceful, when we consider the proportion to which such illiterates rise in some States. In Louisiana 15 per cent. of the whites of American birth and parentage are illiterate; in North Carolina more than 12 per cent.; in South Carolina, Alabama, and Kentucky, more than 10 per cent.

II. White people, American born, but of foreign parentage. Of these children of immigrants, above ten years of age, 155,388, or only 1.1 per cent., are illiterate. In only one State, Texas, does their percentage of illiteracy reach 10. They are thus much superior to those of American parentage, and are indeed by far the least illiterate of all four classes

III. White people, foreign born; or immigrants. Of these of the designated age 1,650,361, or 12.7 per cent., are illiterate. That is a regrettably large proportion, but it is not a "disgrace to the nation," at least not to this nation. We are not responsible for it. We are responsible for their presence here, but we certainly cannot be held to account for their illiteracy, original or continued.

IV. Negroes, all American born and practically all of American parentage; of whom the truly appalling number of 2,227,731, or 30.4 per cent., are illiterate. For these we are responsible. We made them illiterate, and we are keeping them so.

Now while the percentage of the first-named class is much smaller than of the third, the actual number of its illiterates is nearly as large. That is to say, there are almost as many white natives of American parentage who are illiterate as there are immigrants. Precisely one-fourth of all our illiterates are white men and women, born in this country of native parents. That is one of the most discreditable features of the whole situation. It appears the more so by contrast with the second of these classes, American-born children of foreign parents. The much lower rate of illiteracy among the latter is attributed to various causes, but chief among them must be reckoned the superior ambition of the immigrants and their keener appreciation of the need of education, and of the opportunities for getting it, which their children here enjoy. Having been deprived of or denied such opportunities themselves in the Old Country, they are eagerly determined that their children here shall enjoy them to the full. Many an observer of our schools can testify to the fact that children of immigrants are, of all, the most faithful in attendance and most diligent in study.

Against the depressing statement of the gross number of illiterates, which appears in the report to which we have referred, is to be placed the encouraging fact that the actual number and the percentage of illiterates are both steadily and even rapidly decreasing. Despite our enormous growth in total population, and despite the enormous influx of immigrants such as President Wilson has described as "men of the lowest class and men of the meaner sort, unlikely fellows," there are actually fewer illiterates in the United States now than at any other time in the last thirty years at least, while, of course, the percentage is very much lower

still. In 1880 there were 6,239,958 illiterates, or 17 per cent. In 1890 the maximum number was reached—6,324,702, or 13.3 per cent. In 1900 the number declined to 6,180,069, or 10.7 per cent. In 1910 it was 5,516,163, or 7.7 per cent. That has been a noteworthy decrease in percentage in thirty years. Equally noteworthy is the actual decrease of 663,906 in the last ten years.

It is to be observed also that this decrease, both in actual numbers and in percentage, has occurred in all of the four classes excepting the third, and that even in it there has been a decrease in the percentage. The actual number of illiterates of foreign birth has increased, but not as much as the total number of aliens in this country. In 1890 they were 13.1 per cent. illiterate; in 1900, 12.9 per cent; and in 1910, 12.7 per cent. This unfortunately cannot, it is to be feared, be attributed to an improvement in the quality of immigration. It is probably due in great measure to the more general sending to school of young immigrants between the ages of ten and fourteen years, and to the higher death-rate among illiterate than literate adults. In the other classes the decrease of illiterates from 1890 to 1910 has been in the first, from 7.5 to 3.7; in the second, from 2.2 to 1.1; and in the fourth, from 57.1 to 30.4.

Another significant fact is that in all classes except the third the percentage of illiteracy is highest among the old and lowest among the young. Thus among American-born whites, the first class, the percentage of illiterates is 7.6 among those over sixty-five years of age; 5.6 among those between forty-five and fifty-four; 2.8 between twenty and twenty-four; and 2.2 between ten and fourteen. The same condition has prevailed at each of the former censuses. The percentage of illiterates between the ages of ten and fourteen was 6.7 in 1890, 4.4 in 1900, and 2.2 in 1910.

In the third class, that of immigrants, this rule does not prevail, excepting that in the youngest age, from ten to fourteen, the percentage of illiteracy is only about one-fourth what it is on the average; another proof of the attendance at school of such aliens. The percentage at that age is also steadily decreasing. It was 5.9 in 1890, 5.6 in 1900, and only 3.5 in 1910. There has also been a marked decrease at all ages above forty-five years. But at all ages between fourteen and forty-five there has been, and still seems to be, an increase in the percentage of illiteracy. These circum-

stances are presumably due to the causes already ascribed to the decrease in the general percentage of illiterate immigrants, and also to the returning to Europe of many of the elders.

The fourth class, that of the negroes, is the largest of all, and in some respects the most formidable and difficult to deal with. Yet it is the one for which we are most responsible, and the continued existence of which is most discreditable to us. It presents, in respect to the variation of percentage of illiteracy according to age, precisely the same phenomena that the first class, American-born whites of American parentage, does. Illiteracy is highest in the oldest and lowest in the youngest. The difference between the two extremes is, however, much greater than among the whites. At from ten to fourteen only 18.9 per cent. are illiterate, against 74.5 per cent. above sixty-five. At all ages, however, there has been a marked decrease of illiteracy at every decennial census. At from ten to fourteen the percentage was 39.8 in 1890, 30.1 in 1900, and 18.9 in 1910. At above sixty-five in the same years it was, respectively, 90.2, 85.4, and 74.5. Of course, nearly all those at the latter age were born and spent their childhood in a time when negroes were enslaved or were not admitted to ordinary school privileges.

It is obvious, then, particularly in the contrast between the school-age figures for 1900 and for 1910, that we are making much progress in the education of the colored race, or at least in removing from the nation the reproach and disgrace of its illiteracy. Nor is the combating of illiteracy among immigrants being neglected. In city and country more and more night schools are being established for the instruction of adult immigrants in the English language, and the requirements of naturalization and other circumstances and influences are more and more impelling both men and women to improve the opportunities thus offered to them.

It will be profitable to note briefly some tendencies of the public-school service, which must be, of course, the chief agency for the abolition of illiteracy. It is an interesting circumstance that the percentage of school-age population to the total population is markedly decreasing. If we went back a century the decline would be startling. Going back only so far as 1870, the percentage of school age was then

31.26, in 1880 it was 30.03, in 1890 it was 29.45, in 1900 it was 28.16, and in 1910 it was 26.48. This decline, too, has been in the face of an inclination in some places to extend the limits of school age so as to include a larger proportion of the population. We must attribute it to various causes, including the well-known decrease of the birth-rate, increased longevity, and the influx of adult immigrants.

At the same time the schools have been increasingly diligent and efficient in gathering in scholars. In 1870 their total enrolment was only 17.8 per cent. of the total population and scarcely 57 per cent. of the school population. In 1880 it was 19.6 of the former and 65 of the latter; in 1890, 20.2 and 68; in 1900, 20.4 and 72; and in 1910, 19.3 and 73. This increase of from 57 to 73 per cent. is to be attributed to various causes, conspicuous among which are the establishment of kindergartens and the better enforcement of the compulsory education and truancy laws.

With these processes in operation, and with a recognition of these conditions, causes, and circumstances of illiteracy, the statistics which have been quoted become far less alarming than they might otherwise be. It is bad enough to have so many illiterates among us. But it is encouraging, and even inspiring, to know that both positively and relatively their number is steadily and rapidly diminishing, through the operation of influences which are likely to continue that diminution at an accelerated rate. We are not yet the most literate of nations, but we are immeasurably further from being the most illiterate. Indeed, taking into account our two enormous elements of negroes and immigrants, to which there is no counterpart in any other nation, our record for literacy is probably unequaled in the world. Or if it is not so to-day, the processes now in triumphant operation will soon bring that consummation to pass.

## COMMENT

Press reports to the effect that His Excellency, the Hon. George Fred Williams, our Diplomat of Democracy at Athens, had addressed a note to his colleagues, informing them that his Government had directed him to visit Albania to inquire into the situation "in the interest of peace and good will among all parties and all races," and that "the Diplomatic Corps was amazed at this inadmissible interven-



tion," have disturbed the State Department so mightily that, according to the *Springfield Republican*, Mr. Williams may be permitted to resume the practice of law when he returns for his well-earned holiday. It is a consummation devoutly to be wished, no doubt; but if it should transpire that His Excellency did not really intervene by force of arms, but only intermeddled because the new King was not elected by the people, drinks cognac, and generally misbehaves, upon what ground could he be rebuked without impairing our reputation for consistency in pursuing a policy of service to all mankind?

Speaking at the opening of the new American (Methodist Episcopal) University at Washington, President Wilson said:

The object of scholarship, the object of all knowledge, is to understand, is to comprehend, is to know what the need of mankind is. That is the reason, ladies and gentlemen, why scholarship has usually been more fruitful when associated with religion; and scholarship has never, so far as I can at this moment recollect, been associated with any religion except the religion of Jesus Christ.

Whereupon Mr. Herman Bernstein wrote to the President as follows:

I feel quite certain that you know that true scholarship has ever been and is now the very essence and foundation of Judaism, the religion that gave birth to Christianity. It seems to me that it would, therefore, be unfair to exclude Judaism from the religion with which scholarship has been intimately associated.

You know of my profound admiration for you as a great President, a great thinker, and a great man. I feel that you would not make a statement that is unfair. With deep regard, I am faithfully yours.

HERMAN BERNSTEIN.

And Mr. Wilson replied:

MY DEAR BERNSTEIN: I am sorry that there should have been any unfair implication in what I said at the opening of the American University. You may be sure that there was nothing of the kind in my mind, or very certainly nothing in my thoughts, that would discriminate in the important matter you speak of, against Judaism.

I find that one of the risks and penalties of extemporaneous speaking is that you do not stop to consider the whole field, but address yourself merely to the matter directly in hand. With sincere respect and appreciation, cordially yours,

WOODROW WILSON.

That Mr. Bernstein's point was well taken requires no demonstration in view of the universal recognition of the

Talmudic scholarship of the Jewish rabbis. A like statement might be made with equal verity respecting Confucianism; in fact, the close association of scholarship and practically every great religion is manifest to all students. That Mr. Wilson meant no offense to the Jews, who have been his most ardent supporters, hardly required a disclaimer, although, doubtless, it was well to make one in response to an inquiry. What interests us is how the mind of a scholar could evolve so sweeping an assertion even in extemporaneous speaking, and whether, since his letter indicates nothing to the contrary, Mr. Wilson as an historian is of the same opinion still. If he were not so busily occupied with Mexico and Bryan and Labor and Gompers and Trusts and Conspiracies and Revenues and McAdoo and Rural Credits and Roosevelt and Conservation and Lane and Prohibition and Daniels and Colorado and Ammons and Various Other Things, we should ask him to write an article on the subject, beginning with the Book of Ptah-hotep and continuing through the list to our own New Testament.

Mr. J. Maynard Barney writes from Syracuse:

SIR,—In the April issue of *The Commoner* I find the following statement on page 12. Reading from description of "The Bryan Birthday Dinner," the first paragraph under "Notable Substitutes," I find the statement that "the Cabinet member from Nebraska" made Woodrow Wilson, President.

Personally I am convinced (from past events) that you can explain all this to us in your editorial columns. You might also explain how subscriptions to *The Commoner* are going to carry the next elections for the Democratic party. (See free coupon offer on page 11.)

We could, of course, but we shall not. Mr. Bryan, as a scapegoat, has our sympathy.

Speaking on "Faith" at Pennington, N. J., Mr. Bryan asked:

"Before you laugh at big mysteries try to solve this one: Why does a red cow who eats green grass give white milk that yields yellow butter?"

Because a cow is no diplomat; is that the answer?

Wire your Senator to stand by President Wilson, who is insisting that the anti-trust bills be passed before the present session of Congress adjourns.—*The Commoner*.

CONSPIRATOR!